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MAYOR KENNETH A. GIBSON

Second Inauguration Address

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Four years ago today, we set out to consciously test our governmental institutions. Our test was to determine whether it would be possible for men and women of energy and dedication to improve the quality of life for the citizens of our city. Today, four years later, we are here to rededicate ourselves to that task, encouraged by the fact that much has been achieved and we are challenged by the reality that much remains to be done.

It has been four years marked by successes as well as frustrations. We have had our private disappointments as well as public victories. And it has been four years that have taught us that what we can achieve is limited only by the breadth of our vision and by our willingness to work together.

In some ways, we are our own worst enemies, especially when we allow ourselves to indulge in the vicious cynicism that at times befalls our city. A cynicism that saps us of our energy and deadens our imagination. It allows us to rationalize our municipal shortcomings without ever questioning our own individual roles. It resigns us to the inequities and the injustices of a society where weapons of destruction have had a greater priority than human development. And where personal dignity has time and again been sacrificed to the dictates of private property.

But cynicism need not shape the future of Newark. The image of our city begins with each one of us. If we demand more of ourselves, then we will achieve more for our community. If we ask more of each other, then we will be that much closer to the goals we all share.

What limits us in shaping Newark's future is not really whether we have the resources or technology. As a nation we have demonstrated the capability to achieve startling technological advances. No, what limits us in improving the quality of life in urban America is individual and institutional commitment to change and the spirit of cooperation to make some positive use of that commitment.

We must remember that the greatest natural resource that this country has is not its oil wells or coal mines, or its silver or gold . . . the greatest natural resource that we have is our people. We must remember that human rights are more important than property rights. . . that people are more important than things.

We live in the richest country in the world.

—If we can send a rocket to the moon to bring back rocks to study we should be able to teach a high school graduate how to read.

—If we can transplant a human kidney then we should be able to provide basic health care to our senior citizens.

—If we can rebuild western Europe after World War II, then we can rebuild Newark and other central cities.

—If we can spend billions of dollars to fight wars in other countries, we should be able to fight hunger and poverty at home.

It is an unending source of wonder to me how often petty and inconsequential issues constrain us from really important and significant achievements.

The challenges that lie before us require the skills and talents of not just a Mayor or a City Council, but all of us. For the next four years you have my renewed pledge of personal commitment and cooperation. I look forward to yours.

So today, let us conclude one term of office and begin another. Let us continue forward, tougher and wiser for our past mistakes, with a new sense of the possible and a reinforced commitment to make the possible a reality. Together, we can make our efforts in government a success and, in doing so, restore some measure of confidence in ourselves and our public institutions.

Stockpiles of nuclear arms will not secure our nation, but vision will.

The vision to teach our children to read.

The vision to love and care for our elderly.

The vision to create a domestic Marshall Plan to rebuild Newark and other cities.

The vision to eliminate poverty, unemployment and hunger.

We need the vision to lead the people out of the wilderness of need to the promised land of plenty.